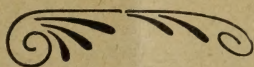


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# IS DEATH THE GATE OF LIFE ?



AN ADDRESS

— BY —

WILLIAM RICHMOND,

(OF NOTTINGHAM),

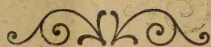
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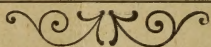
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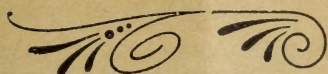


Addresses on Scriptural Subjects are  
delivered at the People's Hall, every Sunday  
Evening at 6.30.





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# Is Death the Gate of Life?

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AS our present life is brief, no question can be so profoundly interesting as the above. "Where will this great army be a hundred years hence?" was asked by a General, as he surveyed his battalions on the battle-field. And well may we ask—"Where will be, in a hundred years, the teeming millions, which to-day inhabit the earth, and where are the myriads of past ages?" It is computed that over 32,000,000 people die yearly. Theologians and Poets tell us they are all living. Such expressions as "Passed on," "Gone to a world of Spirits," "Gone to Heaven or Hell," are commonly used to express the popular idea.

The great majority of professing Christians, and many others, agree with the poet Longfellow, who says:

"Life is real; Life is earnest;  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art; to dust returnest  
Was not spoken of the soul."

Nearly all Christendom holds that "Death is the Gate of Life," and their faith rests on this assumption. If death be not the Gate of Life, then the Virgin Mary and the Roman Saints are dead, and cannot pray for, nor intercede for anyone; nor would our fellow-creatures be terrified with pictures of Papal or Protestant Hell; nor comforted with the idea of the Soul's departure to Heaven at death. The following ridiculous and horrible picture from St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Hymn-Book would no longer enslave the simple minded—

"Oh turn to Jesus, Mother turn,  
And call Him by His tenderest names;  
Pray for the holy souls that burn  
This hour amid the cleansing flames."

Many sincere, devout people believe that "Death is the Gate of Life," having been taught so from infancy, and feel sure it is to be found in the Bible; but few have searched the Holy Scriptures to satisfy themselves upon the subject. They have been so accustomed to hearing sermons and singing hymns about the Soul's immortality, that they never question the matter.

## Was Death the Gate of Life to Adam?

Was Longfellow right when he said: "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul"? In *Gen. ii. 7*, we read, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and *man* became a living Soul." What became a living Soul? Man. What was Man? The creature formed



of the dust of the ground. Theologians tell us that a soul was put into the man formed of the dust, and that was the real man. If the impartation of the breath of life means that an immortal personal spirit was put in Adam, then we must conclude that the lower animals, in fact, every creeping thing has an immortal soul in its body, for we read, *Gen.* vii. 15-21, concerning the Deluge: "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both fowl, and cattle, and beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died."

"Man became a living soul." The Hebrew word, "Nephesh," here rendered "living soul" simply means "living creature." This is seen in the fact that the same word is rendered "living creature" in the following texts: *Gen.* i. 20-24, (margin soul), ii. 19, ix. 10-12, *Lev.* xi. 43. If the reader will refer to his Concordance he will find, Asses, Sheep and Whales are "living souls," also, that the soul, when man is spoken of, "can eat," "be smitten with the sword," "sleep," "die," and as a "dead body." The word "Nephesh" is four times rendered "body." It is also rendered, "heart," "life," "mind," but never "Immortal Soul." It is also rendered by more than twenty different words, but never carries the idea commonly supposed—a personal being in a disembodied condition, nor an imperishable being in a body. And the same is true of the word Spirit. Search the Scriptures and see.

What became of Adam? *Gen.* iii. 19. "In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread till thou return to the ground; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return. Adam could not have expected to appear in a world of disembodied spirits as the result of such a sentence.

When do babes get their immortal souls? If put into them, it must be previous to birth or after. Let those who believe it say **when**. Jesus says, *John* iii. 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," Wesley says, "I am an immortal spirit strangely commingled with a little dust." Can both these statements be harmonised? When is that immortal part put in man; and in what part of his body does it reside? If a man were encased in an air-tight steel vessel, say 12-ins. thick, or 12-yards, he would quickly die, and that which escaped through the steel would be his immortal part. This is all that goes to the bliss of Heaven or to the pains of Hell, and is as much like nothing as language can make it, an imaginary something less tangible than the atmosphere. It occupies no space, and all of these souls could be contained in a thimble. Yet when such are spoken of, either in happiness or misery, language is employed which can only be applied to tangible beings. It would certainly be more reasonable to prove first that the dead are alive somewhere, before attributing to them such experiences. In *Gen.* v. eight deaths are recorded. Significant words and still more significant *silence*!—"And he *died*." Is that all? That is all the Bible says about them.

## The Deluge.

Christians believe in a Deluge, not only because it is recorded in *Genesis*, but because they believe Christ in *Matt.* xxiv. 37-39. See also 1 *Peter* iii. 20; 2 *Peter* iii. 5-6; *Heb.* xi. 7.

## Was Death the Gate of Life to the multitude who perished in the flood?

Did they find themselves in a Roman Purgatory, or a Papal or Protestant Hell, or roaming in space as taught by Spiritualists? God said He would *destroy* them, and Jesus says, "He destroyed them all." Did God deceive them? Perish the thought! The Bible, from the beginning to end, shows that, "The Wages of Sin is Death," and that all the finally impenitent will be destroyed.

## Was Death the Gate of Life to Abram?

What saith the Scriptures? *Gen.* xxv. 7-8: "These are the days of the years of Abram's life, which he lived: a hundred, three-score and fifteen years." v. 8: "And Abram gave up the ghost (expired) [ref. *Job* xi. 20, margin] and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered unto his people." Seven details are recorded in v. 9: who buried, name, locality, possessor of field, owner's father, purchaser and seller. What a mighty fact is overlooked if Abram "passed on" or went to Heaven! Why are all these details mentioned and the great fact of his departure into another world omitted? Here the "Father of the Faithful" and the "Friend of God" dies, and not a ray of light is given to show that Death is the Gate of Life. And what is more, we have Jesus confirming the death of the Patriarchs:—"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." *John* vi. 49. Also Paul, in *Heb.* xi. 13-39, speaking of the Fathers of Israel, says:—"These all died in faith, *not* having received the promise." Also others were tortured, not accepting deliverance. Why? That they might ascend from martyrdom to Heaven? No. That they might obtain a "*Better Resurrection.*"

But some might say: Does not the Record say, that Abram was gathered to his people? Yes. But we also read, that they were Idolators. No one would say that Abram went to a place where the souls of Idolators are supposed to go. Such company would be repulsive to Abram. And we read, "All go to one place."—*Ecc.* iii. 20. Abram was gathered to the dead. It is there they sleep till "All who are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth."—*John* v. 28.



## Was Death the Gate of Life to Job?

*Job* xiv. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not." The compilers of the Church Prayer Book have added the words, "In one stay." This addition suggests that Death is the Gate of Life, and that the man continues in another stay after death. Evidently they thought Job's words contradicted their creed, else, why add the words? Why had they not the honesty to say, it was their own invention? Job says, "Man continues *not*; he flees as a shadow." Does a shadow continue? Man is cut down like a flower. Does a flower go to bloom in another world? Verse 21 tells us that the dead know not what is transpiring on earth. "His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; they are brought low, and he perceiveth it not of them." Is not this true of the living, when in a sound sleep? Where is the supposed ever-living, ever-conscious spirit during sleep? A person in that condition could be placed on the edge of a precipice, or in front of an express train, yet the supposed spirit would not make the slightest effort to save the man from the danger: which clearly proves that in such a case man is entirely unconscious. If unconscious in natural sleep, is there any reason to suppose that there is continued consciousness in the deeper sleep of death? If the supposed immortal spirit is always conscious when out of the body it would be always conscious in the body. Verse 12 tells us that, "Man lieth down;" verse 13, "~~He~~ is hidden in the grave," but, thank God, not for ever. According to v. 14. Resurrection is the Gate of Life Immortal. Job sleeps, till God wakes him. *Job* xiv. 13.

If death were the gate of Heaven, what a long time Job was near that gate without a glimpse of the glory that awaited him. Let the reader ponder Job's pathetic words, *Job* xix. 13 to 22 verse. Was not such suffering sufficient to call forth some thought of the glory of Heaven? Would it not have done so, if true? Would he have been insensible to such an immediate deliverance, yet so transported with a deliverance which was far away in the future? With what vigorous, triumphant faith he speaks as he looked forward to Resurrection as the Gate of Life! *Job*, verses 23 to 27 of xix ch.—"Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in a rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth: and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Reader, is that your faith? If not, Why not? It is the Bible faith, as we shall further show.

## Was Death the Gate of Life to Moses?

In *Deut.* xxxiv. 1-4, we read, God showed Moses the Promised Land, and God said, "*This is the Land* which I sware unto Abram, Isaac, and Jacob." God told Abram to look North, South, East and



West, and that He would give Him the land he saw. Ministers tell their people to look up above the sky for the Promised Land. They speak of an imaginary Canaan and Jordan, and that death lands them in this celestial Canaan. But the Bible Jordan and Canaan are on the Earth. Death was not the Gate of the Promised Land to Moses, but death kept him out of it. Moses was not permitted to enter Canaan because he sinned, but, if modern Theology be true, then God gave him a celestial Canaan, instead of an earthly one, as a punishment. What a strange reward for sin !

Jesus says, *Matt. v. 5*, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the *earth*," and Paul shows that Abram, Isaac, and others who died in faith have not received the promise, but are waiting the time when all God's people will be made perfect. *Heb. xi.* last verse.

## Was Death the Gate of Life to David ?

What was David's hope ? In *2 Sam. xxiii. 5*, he says, "This is all my salvation and all my desire. What did he mean ? See verses 2 to 6 (Revised Version). He here speaks by the Spirit of God, saying, "One that ruleth over men righteously, that ruleth in the fear of God ; He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth—a morning without clouds." In verse 5, he says, "My house is not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure ; for it is all my salvation and desire, although He maketh it not to grow." In *2 Sam. vii.* the same covenant is referred to in verse 12, showing it was not to be fulfilled in David's life, but that David was to sleep with his Fathers. Verse 19 says, it was to be in a great while to come. Verse 16 tells us, this reign of righteousness was to be established for ever, before David. When will David realize his salvation and desire ? *Ps. xvii. 15*, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." The Gospel which was believed by the 3,000 converts at Pentecost, *Acts ii.*, shows that David's salvation and desire were the Pentecostal Gospel.

1st—We see David had not gone to Heaven.—*Acts ii. 34*.

2nd—God had sworn with an oath unto David, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.—30 verse.

Thus we see that the righteous Ruler promised is David's greater Son, and the *Cloudless Morning* is the glorious reign in Jerusalem, where David reigned, and that *Resurrection is the Gate of Life to all these things*. The following texts will confirm these facts : *Luke xx. 35-36 ; John vi. 39-40-44 ; Luke xiv. 14. Psalm xxxix. 13*, confirms the statement that David was expecting to be sleeping in the dust ; where, he prays, "Oh, spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." Here again, the Prayer-Book compilers have perverted the statement by adding the word "seen," which suggests that David had gone to live in an unseen world.

David says in *Psalm* xlix. 15, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for He shall receive me." Here we see the words "me" and "my soul" are identical, and that David's soul would go to the grave; but, like his Lord, he could say: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell (the grave). So, in the Resurrection, David will wake in the likeness of his Lord, and Resurrection will be to him the "Gate of Life."

No clearer answer to our question could be reasonably asked for, than that which we get from Hezekiah's Meditation on Death, *Isaiah* xxxviii.—"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death; and Isaiah the Prophet, the son of Amos, came unto him, and said unto him: Thus saith the Lord: Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." What would Hezekiah understand? Would he think the message meant "Depart to Glory?" How emphatic! "die" and "not live." Why did the good King weep sore? He said, he had walked before God in truth. If death were the Gate of Life, surely he would know it. Many people sing of Heaven: "How I long to be there." Yet when the time draws near, they are anxious to defer their hope. In *Isaiah* xxxviii. 17, we read: "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption. So Hezekiah understood that if he died his "soul" would go to the pit of corruption. But if to die, (and not to live) was understood to mean "ascend to glory," where could we see love, or cause for such thankfulness? Hezekiah understood that death would prevent him from either seeing God, or praising Him. (18th verse.) Modern teaching states the reverse. Verse 11, (margin Revised Version), states that he would go among those who have ceased to be. Verse 12, that God would make an "end" of him.

## Did Jesus teach that Death is the Gate of Life?

There was one occasion in the life of Jesus which seemed to loudly call for such teaching, if it were true. In *John* xi, we read, Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. If we see a loved one in deep sorrow, are we not delighted if we can give him real comfort? If Jesus taught that "Death was the Gate of Life," would he have withheld such comfort from the sorrowing sisters of Lazarus? Their only hope appeared to be, that their brother would rise again at the *last* day, verse 24, and when Martha told Jesus so, Jesus did not say, "I have more immediate comfort than that, your brother is "not dead;" he has "passed on;" or, he is "before the throne." Let us note the facts stated:—

1st—There is only one Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus." Surely this does not mean, only part of him.

2nd—Jesus says, "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*,"

3rd—Jesus says, "I go to wake him" (not part of him) "out of sleep."

4th—The disciples thought Jesus meant natural sleep.

5th—Then Jesus said *plainly*, "Lazarus is dead."

How plain! Yet Theology says Lazarus was more alive than ever.



## Moody v. Christ.

The late Mr. Moody said, shortly before his death, "They will be saying soon, 'Mr. Moody is dead:' Don't you believe a word of it." Now, supposing Mr. Moody had been present when Jesus said plainly, "Lazarus is dead," would not he (if consistent) have said, "Don't you believe a word of it?" What a sad departure from the Gospel of Christ! and, sadder still, that thousands are deceived by such errors. Many have tried to explain where Lazarus was, during the four days between death and resurrection. All difficulty vanishes if we accept the Record. Jesus says, "Where have ye laid him?" The disciples reply, "Come and see." Jesus cometh to the grave. What happened? Mark the words of the "Prince of Life," the "Conqueror of Death." "Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus come forth!' and *he that was dead* came forth." So, "Resurrection was the Gate of Life." The dead came forth, not the deathless spirit came forth from the tomb; not from Spirit-land. Jesus did not say, "Lazarus come down." What a revelation Lazarus could have made if he had been four days in another world! but he was as silent as the grave, from which Jesus called him. What a strange experience Lazarus would have had if he had been called back from Heaven to this world of sin and sorrow! When the Scriptures are quoted in reference to death, it is often remarked, "That means the body, not the real man." Did not Jesus mean the real man, when he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth?"

God's will is plainly revealed in *John* vi. 40: "This is the will of my Father—that everyone who seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have Eternal Life; and I will raise him up at the *Last Day*." This statement is repeated in v. 39 and 44. The gracious promise is added, v. 37, "I will in no wise cast out." What is meant by coming to Jesus? Receiving His words and surrendering our hearts to Him. What benefit is here promised to those who come to Him? Is it a state of bliss for a deathless spirit? Is death to become the Gate of Life and Glory to those who come? How different is the Will of God in Christ here stated:—

1st—For what do we come? For Eternal Life.

2nd—When? At the Last Day.

3rd—How? By being raised up.

How confusing it would be to apply to these texts the suggestion that it is not the real man, but only the body, that Jesus is speaking about. Such reasoning would show that only the body, not the real man is to be raised up, and only the body, not the real man, will have Everlasting Life.

But Jesus shows that it is the believer who dies and is raised up at the last day and receives the gift of Eternal Life. Such reasoning needs only applying to any text on the subject of life and death to show its absurdity. Let the reader ask, "Did Jesus teach that Death is the Gate of Life?" and let him search our Lord's testimony for the answer.

## Apostolic Testimony.

**Immortality no mystery.** *2 Tim. i. 10.* Here Paul says, "Jesus brought life and immortality to light." Therefore it ceases to be a mystery. Then there should be no difficulty in understanding it. Whichever be the Bible doctrine, is made clear. If *Death* be the Gate of Life Immortal, as most people believe, then that doctrine is clearly revealed, and if *Resurrection* be the Gate of Life, then that is clearly revealed. If the popular idea be true, it cannot be said that Jesus brought it to light, because that doctrine was taught centuries before Jesus was born. How did Jesus bring life and immortality to light? Paul says, He abolished death. How strange, to abolish the "Gate of Life" to bring life to light!

If *death*, as the poet says, "Gives us more than was in Eden lost," why abolish it? If death be a friend, why does Paul call it an enemy? How strange, if death be the wages of sin and also the Gate of Life! What confusion is created by the theory that death is the Gate of Life, and no wonder that those who believe it say, "the Bible is a mysterious book." But the mystery arises from a belief in the popular idea of the immortality of the soul. If such an idea were true, then Jesus did not abolish death in Himself, nor anyone else. How did Jesus abolish death? Hear His answer, *Rev. i. 18*, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore—Amen.'" So Jesus abolished death in His own person, and what is still more blessed news, He adds, "And I have the **Keys** of Death and Hades" (the grave). So He is able to fulfil His promise, thrice repeated in *John vi.*, by raising all His faithful ones at the last day, and so abolishing death in their case by raising them incorruptible. So we read of the victory over death by Christ. The first-fruits of them that *sleep*. Afterwards, of those who are His at His coming. *1 Cor. xv.* Such is the Life and Immortality brought to light. Now let the reader search, and see if the popular doctrine of the soul's immortality is brought to light in the Scripture. What is the testimony concerning life, death, and immortality? If death is the "Gate of Life," then it is clearly stated. We find the Apostles agree with their Divine Teacher. *1 Cor. xv.* is read in the Church Burial Service. Does Paul speak of those who have "passed on"? Does he say, as the Prayer-Book does, "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are enjoying felicity." The dear brother thus referred to, is often a person not fit to live on earth, and his departure is a blessing to the world. But the Priest reads, that he is gone to felicity, and joy, and is buried in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection. What will Christ the Judge say to such teachers? Paul says, "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap *corruption*; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap *Eternal Life*." *Gal. vi. 18.* And well might he add, "Be not deceived."



Paul also exhorted Timothy to Preach the Word, "For the time will come when they will not endure *sound doctrine*, but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn *unto fables*. 2 Tim. iv. 1-2-3-4.

What is Paul's sound doctrine in his great treatise on Life, Death and Immortality? of which he says, in 1 Cor. xv. 2, "by which ye are saved." Paul shows only two conditions of life: the first in a natural body, the second in a *spiritual* body. He gives Adam, as a sample of a natural body, which he shows is equivalent to a "living soul." Here we see that a natural body is a living soul. He also shows that Jesus when raised from the dead, is a sample of the spiritual body; and the account of our Lord's resurrection shows that He was such a Being as could eat, drink, and be handled. This is the future life, taught by Jesus and Paul. The spiritual body or house from Heaven, for which Paul longed and suffered. When he, and all of like "precious faith," are raised incorruptible, or changed while living, they will be absent from the natural body and present with the Lord in a spiritual body. Clothed upon with a house not made with hands, but a house or body eternal, which is now in the Heavens in the person of the immortal Jesus. He will descend and bestow that Divine Nature on "all who love His appearing." Paul says not a word about disembodied bliss or life. If such had been true, then Abel has been in bliss for 6,000 years. Paul says, "If Christ be not raised, then they which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." How could the resurrection of Christ affect those who had been in Heaven many centuries, or how could they either perish or fall asleep, if they were deathless spirits, or how could Paul say: "If, after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" If we believe the Bible doctrine that Resurrection is the Gate of Life, how plain and forcible are all Paul's statements. But if we accept the Serpent's statement. "Ye shall not surely die," Gen. iii. 4, or the modern version of the same, the results are confusion and mystery, which prevail in pulpit and pew.

Few Ministers are prepared to state the destiny of either the righteous or the wicked. Earnest study of the Word of God is a rarity in the so-called Christian world. Hence, many things foreign to the Bible prevail, both in preaching and practise.

## Scriptural Comfort to the Bereaved.

Paul, in 1 Thess. iv. 13, would not have his brethren ignorant, concerning them that are asleep. Would they not seem very ignorant if they believed that they are not asleep, but more wide awake than ever? Here we have no such comfort as is commonly given to the bereaved, but the glorious fact that Jesus is coming to raise the **Dead**; and then, and not till then, will they be for ever with the Lord. Let us obey Paul's injunction, iv. 18, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Why was John's Gospel written? *John* xx 31, "These things were written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye may have life through His Name." What did John write about Life? Did he write anything about "Death being the Gate of Life?" Read *John* iii.-v.-vi.-xi.-xx.-xxi. chapters. There the truth that Resurrection is the only way from Death to Life is so plain, that a wayfaring man, or even a child, can understand it.

What must we do to have Eternal Life? Believe that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of the Living God. So those who refuse to believe cannot have Life; for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, might not **Perish**, but have **Everlasting Life**.

Reader, we are all **perishing** creatures, as seen by the above words of Jesus, but He invites us to come to Him for Life Eternal. If we accept the gracious invitation, we shall share in that great and glorious victory which Paul hoped for: the victory over the enemy Death —when this mortal shall put on immortality, and Death shall be swallowed up in Victory. *1 Cor.* xv. 54. Then God's Kingdom will have come, and His will shall be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. We shall be like Christ, and ever with Him, and reign with Him on the earth.

Christ died for our sins that we might have remission of sin through His blood.

Christ rose from the dead, to show us the way from Death to Life.

Christ is coming again to remove all the evils sin has introduced, and to restore Paradise, and there shall be no more death and no more curse, for the former things shall have passed away.

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